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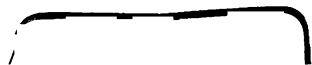
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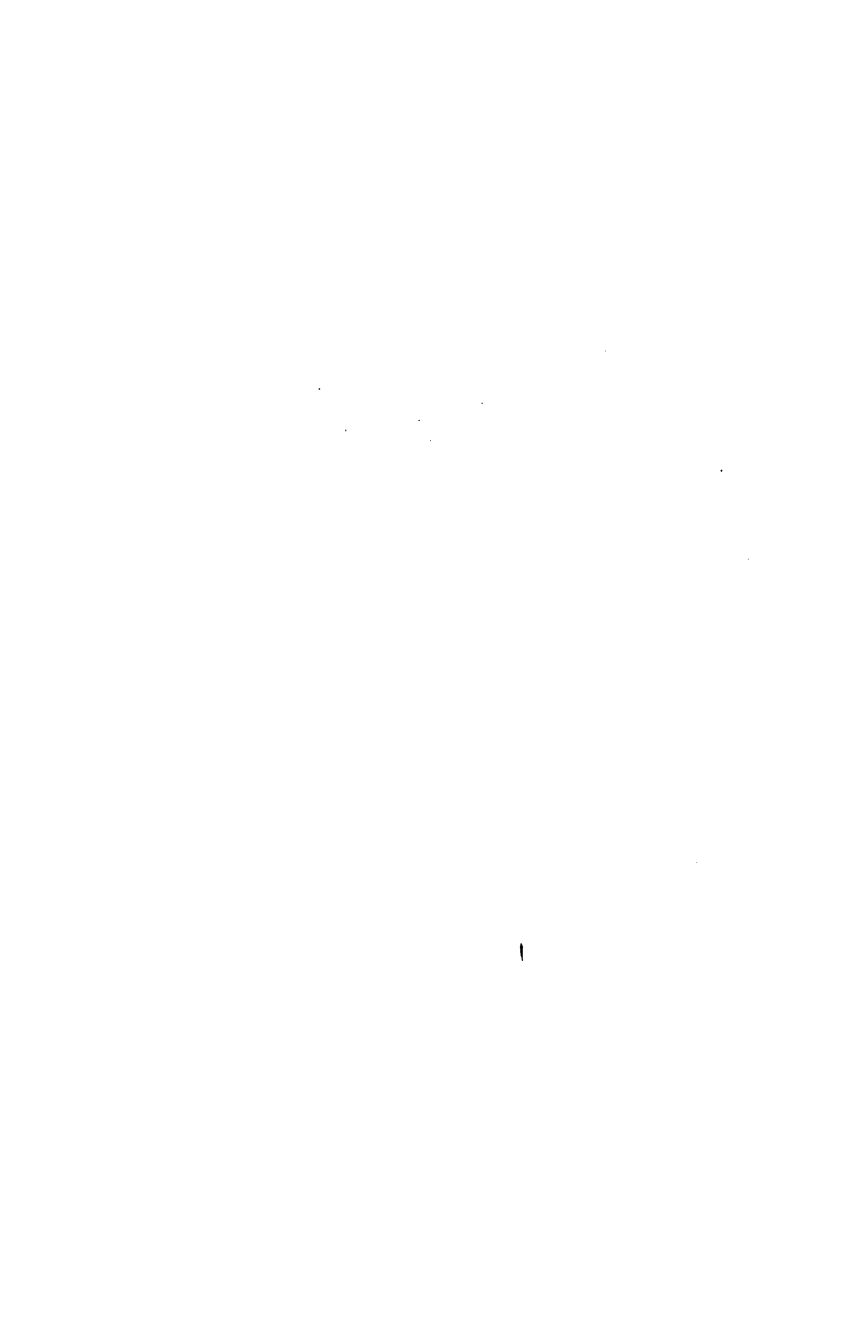
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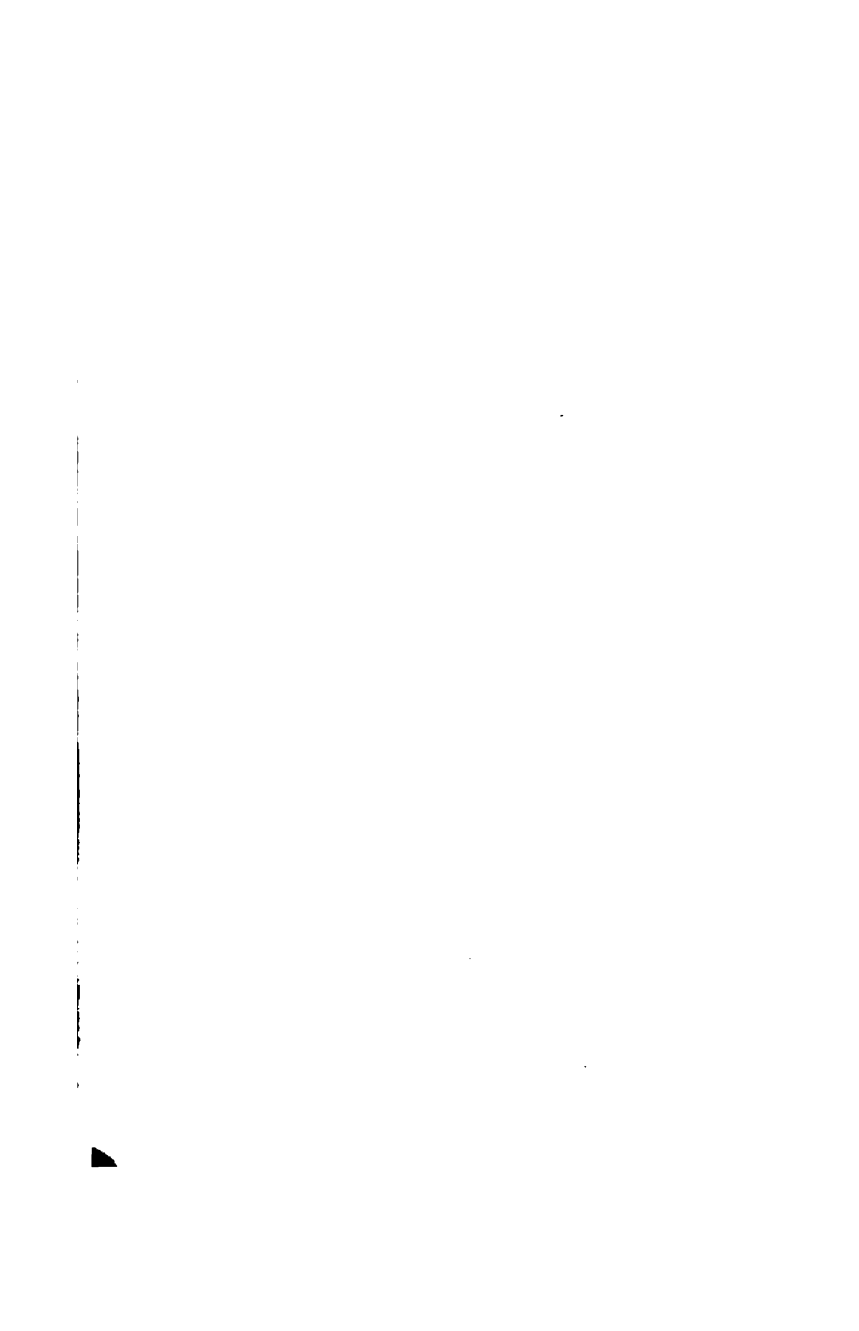
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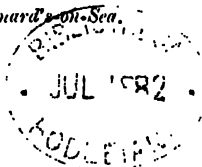
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TAKE THESE THINGS HENCE.

JOHN II. 16.

"Take these things hence."

IT was indeed a sad sight that met the eyes of our Lord as He went towards the Temple so full of holy memories and tender associations.

All the streets leading to the House of God were crowded with noisy pilgrims and busy vendors of merchandise, so that the empty clamour of the world effectually drove out all quiet thoughts of God from those who approached His house of prayer.

If the evil had stopped here, it would not have mattered so much, but the eager Jewish merchants had not respected the sacred building itself. In their pursuit of gain they had overflowed from the outer streets into the very enclosure of the Temple.

The court of the Gentiles was a scene of the utmost tumult and confusion, as all around were penned flocks of sheep and herds of cattle,

intermingled here and there with the stalls of the sellers of doves.

On every side, mixed with the lowing of cattle, rose the sounds of contention, wrangling and disputing, as the buyers and sellers strove to get the better of each other in their hard-fought bargains. To add to all this, under the arcades were ranged the tables of the money-changers, and here the babel of confusion was at its height, as the angry and excited crowd surged around these dishonest traffickers, who would cheat their own kith and kin, if they had so much as the ghost of a chance.

Full of righteous anger at the sight, the Lord stoops down, and from the rushes that strew the floor, He makes a scourge, and forthwith, overthrowing the tables of the moneychangers, giving them no time to gather up their unhallowed gains that roll about the pavement, He drives usurers, dealers, buyers and sellers, with their flocks, herds, and wicker cages of doves, right out of the Temple enclosure into the street, with these scathing words of bitter, indignant scorn, ringing in their ears, "Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise."

This scene is too often enacted even in our own day.

The Lord comes down to enter into that which should be an Holy Temple, dedicated to His service, set apart for His worship, I mean the temple of our hearts, and finds it occupied with other things. He comes yearning to take up His abode within the soul of man, He comes longing to fill that soul which He has purchased with His own blood, full of joy and happiness; He finds, alas! that He has been forestalled. other guests have had precedence of Him.

As there was no room for Him on the night of His nativity in the inn of Bethlehem, so now there is too often no room for Him in our hearts. We have room for our lusts and passions, we have room for our earthly affections, we have room for the world, the flesh, and the devil, but no room for our Lord and Master. Too truly of us may it be said, "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not."

As Jesus comes thus seeking admittance into His Temple, and sees that sanctuary defiled and desecrated, as He hears the idle clamour of the world, as He witnesses the abomination of desolation, unbridled lust and passion ruling, and

reigning in the place of pure love of God, as He marks the cold, languid, contemptuous indifference with which His offers of mercy and pardon are thrust aside, full of righteous anger, does He not cry out to the hardened offenders as of old?

“Take these things hence,” we can hear Him saying. “Have them out, away with them out of My sight, and My presence. You must choose between God and Mammon, between life and death, between purity and lust, between earnestness and indifference, between your Saviour and the world. My Holy Temple have ye defiled, My Father’s house have ye turned to base uses—take these things hence.”

As this, dear brethren, is the first day of our Mission, it will be well for us to clear the way somewhat by turning our attention to some of the things that must be taken hence. It is possible, nay, I may say it is *more* than possible, that some of us have suffered unworthy objects to occupy our hearts. Baptised into the Church of Christ, enlisted soldiers of the Cross, brought up and nurtured within the sheltering care of God’s manifold means of grace, we perhaps have turned recreants, we have forgotten to whom we *owe allegiance*, we have allowed the traffickers

to come into the Holy Temple ; our hearts are not given up as they should be to the service of God.

Now a Mission is a time of intense reality. We don't want mere excitement, we are not on the eager look-out for sensation ; we want to get a real blessing for our souls. God knows we many of us need a blessing. Before, however, Christ can come in, we must make preparation for His coming ; we cannot expect Him to share bed and board with some dark grievous sin ; we must not think that He will be content to occupy His throne with some other object of our love and affection ; He will not be satisfied with a tiny corner of our heart, neither will He for a moment, tolerate the intrusion of the world into the sanctuary of God.

This Mission calls us to be thorough, thorough in our abhorrence of sin, thorough in our repentance, thorough in our faith, thorough in our love, and we trust, as its final issue, thorough in our spiritual joy. Let us then go upon these lines, and try our best by God's help to-day, to discover what we are to do to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.

"Take hence," the Saviour says "*your indifference.*"

We read that while Rome was on fire with the flames that he had kindled, while magnificent buildings were falling all around, and thousands were perishing by a miserable death, the Emperor Nero contemplating the work of his hands from a safe distance, wreathed with a garland of flowers, and surrounded by the vile companions of his pleasures, took a lute, and recited to the soft strains of music some stanzas on the burning of Troy.

But what was this cynical heartlessness, this cold-blooded contempt of suffering and sorrow, this fiendish delight in the agonies and woes of the innocent victims of his malice, compared with much that we see going on in the Church and the world at this present day?

We are living in a world that knows not God, that delights in rejecting His supremacy, in laughing to scorn His authority. The great mass of our fellowmen tread under foot the precious Blood of their Saviour; nay, they will not so much as look at His Cross. His suffering and sorrow are nothing to the heartless, selfish crowds that pass by, the pierced Hands are stretched out all the day long in vain to a disobedient and gainsaying people; the tender, loving, compas-

sionate Voice, falls upon dull and unheeding ears.

In the meanwhile, the perfidy of man, the craft and subtlety of the devil, the natural wickedness of the human heart, are doing their terrible work, are bringing forth their awful fruits.

Misery, unhappiness, broken hearts, homes made desolate, souls robbed of their purity and innocence, dragged down to the lowest depths of degradation, beings formed in the image and likeness of God, made for happiness in time and eternity, bound hand and foot by some overmastering vice, until their very daily life becomes a lurid, living hell—such are some of the works of darkness that are being wrought upon this earth of ours.

And all the time the world goes on with perfect unconcern, prating of a good time coming, shutting its ears to the cries of woe and wretchedness that everywhere abound, and its eyes to the fearful scenes that are being enacted in its streets.

Over all hangs the shadow of impending doom, the awful awakening at the last Day, the stern reckoning with the Judge Who has the keys of life and death, the unfolding of the long-

forgotten records of the past. And then alas ! alas ! for those that have not known God, for those that have rejected Christ ; what but the flames of hell, the agonies of the damned, the horror of that outer darkness where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, the despair, remorse, and unutterable torments, of those who are abandoned most justly, for ever by their God.

And all the time the world goes merrily on, crowding into its balls, concerts, picture-galleries, theatres, rushing from one sensation to another, occupied almost entirely with the pleasures and frivolities of modern fashionable life.

And those who are outside the select circle fill up their spare time with coarser indulgences, and less refined pursuits, pandering to the lowest passions of our fallen nature, administering to the craving of the purely animal instincts, utterly incapable of noble feelings, or generous impulses, seeking happiness in strong drink, vulgar sensuality, or base, sordid greed of gain.

Others supremely indifferent of all this, keep apart from the gay and vulgar throng, and in their intellectual pride and self-sufficiency, busy *themselves* with seeking to undermine the faith

that still lingers in some hearts, striving to reduce all religion to a hopeless chaos of human imagination, and vain conceit, drifting away from the old moorings that satisfied the saints in the past ages of the faith, and launching out into an unknown sea of profitless speculation.

What reck these followers of pleasure, these gay butterflies of fashion, these unthinking sensualists, these blowers of philosophical bubbles, of the sufferings and woes, that afflict poor humanity ; in their fool's paradise they are shut out from the stern realities of life ; let their very kith and kin go their own way if they like to perdition, anything rather than that their own easy, comfortable, dreamy existence should be disturbed.

This spirit of indifference, moreover, has crept into the Church. The citadel has parleyed with the enemy ; the body of the faithful, instituted by Christ to preserve His teaching and carry on His work, like its Founder to breathe a spirit of the deepest and most defiant hostility to the world and its principles, has made a compromise with the foe.

The world patronises the Church, takes her unedr its protection, has a voice in the appoint-

ment too often of her pastors and teachers, frequents her sanctuaries, endorses her doctrines, supports her by its influence ; in return for which the Church waters down her articles of faith, becomes more indulgent to sin, less outspoken in regard to evil, loses heart, earnestness and fervour in the things of God.

Take an ordinary English congregation, (you must not mind plain speaking, or you and I will never be friends ; I must have your confidence and affection if I am to have my work blessed amongst you, besides which, a mission is the very time for straightforward hitting, and by God's help, I mean to say what comes uppermost), take, as I say, an ordinary English congregation, what can be more decorous, eminently respectable, edifying if you like, than its outward demeanour and behaviour in the House of God ; but how full of cold, languid, chilling indifference, is the whole service in which it is engaged ?

The great body of baptised Christians, unmindful of their covenanted promises, never so much as darken the doors of God's house at all, living lives of veritable heathenism within the very *sound of the Church bells* ; so that, putting

out of sight those who are absent from any sufficient and valid reason, those who come to Church may fitly be considered to be the pick of the flock, the shining lights of the community, the sterling ore that has been separated from the worthless dross, the really earnest Christians.

Come into the Church where these earnest Christians, whose souls may well be supposed to be aflame with the love of God, are assembled, and as a keen spectator form your opinion of the value of their religion by the fruits it produces : I am very much afraid that in the generality of cases you will go away with a very indifferent estimate of the value of Christianity, as affecting for good, at least, the outward life.

Listen to the feebleness of the responses, if there is *anything* to listen to at all ; mark the languid indifference manifested in the prayers, too many of the " miserable sinners " by their own confession, not so much as condescending to bend the knee before God. Notice the calm, supercilious air with which the sermon is listened to, as if it were an infliction that must be endured, a trial of patience, a wholesome penance, that forms part of the Sunday morning's obligations ; I say Sunday morning advisedly, because

many of the good folks then present will be absent in the evening. A late dinner about the time of evening service is an article of their creed which cannot be infringed without serious and unheard of consequences. Well, the sermon is certainly receiving a species of attention, but like medicine it is to be taken—with a wry face.

And now comes the crucial test.

Behold a Church with a congregation of a thousand worshippers, eight hundred of whom are of an age and condition to present themselves at the Lord's Table. How many of these, think you, will follow on to know the Lord? How many will draw near to partake of the blessed Sacrament of their Redeemer's love, in obedience to His command to receive spiritual health and sustenance from feeding upon Him by faith?

Surely it would not be too much to expect that of the eight hundred available guests for the glorious banquet, three-fourths, or six hundred would remain. As you look down the Church, on the earnest, devout, eminently respectable, utterly irreproachable Christians, that have been so edifying you by their demeanour, perhaps twenty, or thirty, nay on an *exceptional occasion*, as many as fifty remain to

obey their Master's command, and to commemorate His death until His coming again. The rest vanish like the morning mist before the sun, their religion would not stand the test of reality, it was all very well so long as it was confined to words, when it came to deeds it forthwith evaporated into thin air.

Oh ! the miserable unreality, oh ! the wretched hypocrisy of such a religion as this.

I know that there are all kinds of excuses which are ever being brought forward for the neglect of this plain, manifest, and by no means very arduous duty, not one of them however will hold water. It is astonishing how ready we are to avail ourselves of any excuse when found guilty of a fault, any patchwork that fills up a rent in our moral or spiritual character comes welcome to us. We may be satisfied, we may think that we have perfectly exculpated ourselves ; God is not mocked.

The matter, however, does not end here ; the character and manner of the religious worship, is but a straw showing which way the wind is blowing ; the indifference that is publicly manifested in God's house, influences and gives the tone and colour to the whole of the spiritual

life; the same cold, languid, chilling lukewarmness pervades everything.

Follow these dreary worshippers to their homes, and see what they are when unrestrained by public observation. Their prayers, their bible-reading, their conversation, and their social intercourse, how thoroughly unsatisfactory from every point of view, how lamentably short even of a very ordinary standard of Christian duty they are. And yet these good people are perfectly unconscious of what is lacking, they think they have need of nothing, all the time they are wretched and miserable, poor, blind and naked.

I hope I have not been describing you, but if so I trust my words have gone home. In God's name I say take hence this indifference. Awake from your slumber, it is the lethargy of death. Arouse you from your cold, callous, self-complacent reserve. Even now your heart is hardening, you are gradually becoming insensible to the operations of God's grace; you are drifting farther and farther away from hope, peace, and joy; you are in peril, awful peril of losing your immortal soul.

Take hence your indifference.

Ah! I daresay some of you have been saying "What is the use of this Mission? Why could

we not go comfortably and quietly on as we have done for years? Why introduce a possible element of discord into a united congregation? Why disturb us old-fashioned people with strange practices, and new-fangled doctrines? We are perfectly satisfied with the ministrations of our own clergy, we need not the officious intrusion of a stranger, perfectly ignorant of our individual wants and needs, and altogether in the dark as to the peculiar circumstances of our parish?"

Why? dear friends?

Because, perhaps, some of you have settled down upon your lees, because although you know it not, there is still something lacking in you.

I remember a Mission I was holding in a town where there was a mixed choir of earnest young men and women. As we went about the Church in the earlier after-meetings to speak to the inquirers, the curate-in-charge was perfectly astonished to find who they were that remained to be spoken to about their souls. "Why," said he, "you are getting hold of all my choir; good, earnest people as they are, I did not think that they wanted anything."

And then by-and-bye his wonder was increased by the teachers in the day and Sunday Schools,

the district visitors, churchworkers, and others of good repute for godliness, swelling the numbers of those who were really anxious about their souls.

And this only bore out my experience of other Missions, that there are many good excellent people, who are serving God after a certain fashion, but have become somewhat dead and cold, their life has become too formal; they do what they think is right from a sense perhaps of duty, but not from the best motives of love and gratitude; they are far yet from perfect peace and joy in believing; they are still servants, and not sons.

It is to such that the Mission has an especial message, it places them upon a surer footing, bids them work not for the hope of some reward, but from pure love to Him Who has done so much for us; it gives to them rest in the Lord; a revelation, perhaps, such as they have never before had, of the perfect peace and unbroken joy that Jesus promises, even in this troubled world to such as truly open their hearts to Him.

Besides and beyond this, there are others to whom the Mission speaks, such as those who have hitherto kept aloof from the services of

our Church, who have looked upon her worship as cold, formal, unsuited to their especial wants, our Nonconformist brethren, I mean, who although perhaps not absolutely against us, cannot be said to be altogether for us.

To such, I say, the Mission speaks. We do not come to set up one Church or Denomination against another ; to deal with controversial questions, to stir up strife, to promote dissension are altogether, thank God, outside our province. In speaking the truth frankly, in preaching without reservation and in all fidelity what we believe to be the Gospel of Christ, of course it is impossible to avoid awakening some prejudices, and seeming to controvert some good man's pet theories, as to the due proportions of faith ; nevertheless, our grand object is to break down all barriers that exist between man and man.

We Mission-preachers come to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We come as poor sinners, who by God's infinite mercy, have obtained pardon and forgiveness, and are desirous of passing on the same glorious gifts to others. We come to point to the same precious Saviour we have found so full of love and mercy, to lead those who are troubled, to

the God of all consolation, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to announce that now is the accepted time, that now is the day of salvation.

We address ourselves then to all, independently of what they may denominate themselves. We bid them put their prejudices aside, and listen to the story of man's sin, God's forgiveness, and Christ's redeeming love, that we shall do our best to proclaim.

Oh! how often at the close of some happy Mission-service have I found warm-hearted Baptist and Wesleyan brethren staying behind to clasp me by the hand, and thank me with tears in their eyes, for the message I have brought to them from my Master.

After all, there is nothing like the love of Jesus to break down all human barriers, and to link men together in one holy brotherhood.

These missions teach us how much sterling good there is in human nature. How much real kindness of spirit, and true Christian sympathy exist amongst those who seem to differ most from us.

There is one more class whom we shall *endeavour* to reach, those who have never as yet

known the Lord, who have never felt the burden of their sins, who in a word, are unforgiven and unsaved.

We come to call such to a sense of their lost condition, to arouse them to the awful peril they are in. We wish to sound the call to repentance, to proclaim that the axe is already laid to the root of the trees, and that doom and judgment are at hand.

Oh, my God, do thou bless our work to the salvation of sinners, magnify Thy Name amongst us, quell these rebellious spirits, take away their hard and stubborn hearts of stone, and give to them hearts of flesh. Let every sinner who shall enter this Church find ere this Mission closes, pardon and peace in believing, for Jesu's sake.

Take hence your indifference.

Do not look upon this mission from a lofty eminence of self-esteem and supercilious disdain, as something altogether outside yourself, with which you have no concern, as an amiable weakness, a pardonable lapse of judgment on the part of your worthy vicar.

You must be workers together with us. You must throw your heart and soul into what we are doing. We will not have any calm, indifferent

spectators. We will not have you stand aloof; nay, you *dare* not, as you will answer for your deeds at the judgment day.

Suppose that our evening services interfere with your dinner hour, can you not for Christ's sake make a slight sacrifice during the few days this Mission lasts? Better is it to have an impaired digestion, than a disturbed conscience, and if for some paltry reason you keep aloof from scenes of blessing, I can most certainly promise you the latter.

Some of you that are men of business, can you not shut up your offices and close your shops a little earlier for this short season of earnest warfare for souls? You may lose a few clients, a little custom, be sure the Lord will more than make up for your loss.

At the commencement of the glorious Whitby Mission, a working man said, "I feel that the needs of my soul are of more importance than the needs of my body, and so during the time the Mission lasts, I will put aside my work and strive for a blessing."

Need I tell you that his faith was most wonderfully rewarded, and that long before the Mission was ended he had obtained such a

blessing as he had scarcely dared to hope for.

I do not expect you to give up your work, but I do expect you to make some sacrifice of time and convenience, to make some special effort to bring yourselves, the members of your households, your friends and neighbours, within sound of the message of salvation that the Lord is now sending.

“Take hence,” the Saviour says, “*your fear of man.*”

I remember once holding a Mission in a place where the people stood in such intense fear of one another that they dare not stay to the after-meetings, lest they should become a subject of talk and derision. Some few, it is true, who had the courage of their convictions, remained towards the end of the service, but it was grievous to see the mortal terror in which they stood of what their friends and acquaintances would say.

It was the habit of the men who wanted to speak a few words with me, but could not venture to remain behind in the church, to linger at the church door until I was coming out, and then someone would dart forward, and grasp me by the hand, saying, “Thank you so

much for your sermon 'to-night, which has been so blessed to my soul:" and off my good friend would shoot into the surrounding darkness, and I saw him no more.

Since then, I have always made a point of speaking very plainly about the necessity of our putting aside our fear of one another.

We Mission-preachers are but men, of like passions and feelings with those whom we address; if like so many others we were to be influenced by timidity and fear, where would our work be? We have to come amongst entire strangers, we have to encounter prejudice, and this, at times, of so unreasoning a nature, that the Mission is well-nigh over before the prejudice has entirely died out. We have to submit to criticisms from those who are pretty sure to judge us severely, especially as our work is so important. We have not merely to preach, but to be instant in season and out of season, speaking and pleading face to face with individual souls, ready for any sudden emergency.

It is only by our forgetting ourselves in our work, by remembering that we are merely the humble agents by which God carries out His divine purpose of Redeeming Love that we can do all this.

It is only by bearing in mind how blessed is the labour in which we are engaged, that we have strength and courage to go on. We must of necessity be brave and fearless, we must put all our natural reserve aside, otherwise we should fail utterly ere our mission was accomplished.

We expect, and I maintain have a right to expect, the same of you, dear brethren. Do not let our success be perilled, or our efforts foiled, by any needless, and unmanly timidity.

A Swedish Baron had over the entrance to his house an inscription in three lines to this effect:—

“They say.

What do they say ?

Let them say.”

How admirable these words are.

“*They say.*” They talk, they criticise, they rake up all the gossip—good, bad, and indifferent.

“*What do they say?*” What is it they talk about? Perhaps they say ill-natured things ; perhaps they judge us harshly.

Never mind, “*Let them say.*” Let their idle tongues wag if they will. Let them empty the venom of their rancour and spleen upon us if

they like, what after all does it matter, so long as our conscience is at rest, and our conduct is approved by God ?

Why should we be afraid, we English people, with such stout hearts, with such an instinctive love and admiration for physical courage and daring bravery, of a few foolish, silly, half-witted, idle chatterers ?

I have long since given up caring one straw what people say while I am engaged on my Master's work. I have my duty to do, and do it I will in the teeth of all malice of man or devil, as God helps and instructs me. If I fail, I fail. If I succeed, to my God alone be the honor and the glory.

Suffer, however, a word of warning.

You know that a Mission is an exceptional time. We do not want to cast a slur upon the dear old church-prayers, nothing can be more devotional, nothing can be more helpful for the steady maintenance of the spiritual life, than the quiet, reverential way in which God is worshipped in most parishes after the rites of the Church of England. Special emergencies, however, require special means : and so during a Mission, we go a little bit out of the usual groove, we believe

that charity is better than rubrics, we do certain things (of course with the direct sanction of our Bishops) which we would not think of doing at ordinary times.

This is all very well and reasonable, as all sensible people would admit. There are, however, certain good, well-meaning folks, who have got into a kind of spiritual jog-trot; like horses in a circus, they go round and round in a gentle amble of monotonous piety, never making any definite progress—just where they were years ago. These good folks cannot be whipped and spurred into more activity, they want to be let alone, and so they raise a piteous lamentation about the dreadful things that are being introduced into the church during the Mission.

They object to singing the hymns on their knees, to extempore prayer, and oftentimes to extempore preaching; they do not like the preacher to be too exciting; with a sudden and unexpected zeal for the Liturgy, they object to the setting aside of the Church's regular form of prayer; they find fault with the after-meetings, and have the gravest suspicions of the Mission-preacher's personal intercourse with the enquirers, either in church or vestry.

You must not be surprised to hear something of this. "*Let them say,*" let them have it out, a storm often clears the spiritual atmosphere, and we shall get on all the more pleasantly, and have a greater blessing, I doubt not, in consequence.

Only, dear brethren, do not be led away by those who carp and cavil at everything new ; you know our one object and aim—the honour and glory of Christ in the salvation of immortal souls. The conversion of sinners, the building up of saints, these are the ends, and the sole ends, we have in view.

One word about yourselves.

Do not worry and disturb yourself by thinking about what others will say if you give yourself up to the gracious influences of the Mission.

If the Lord speaks to your soul, as I verily believe He will, oh, for His dear Name's sake, I beseech you, let no unworthy, craven fear mar the work of grace. If you feel the burden of your sins oppress you, if the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, goes home to your inmost heart, if you long for forgiveness, and *pardon*, for peace and joy, if you are filled with

an intense desire to cast your doubts away, and to believe with a simple, child-like faith in Him Who hath loved you with such tender love, oh! I entreat you, avail yourself of the fleeting opportunity, let not the golden moment pass by unused, act as if you had come to the crisis of your life, and were alone in the presence of your God, to decide once for all, the eternal destiny of your soul.

“Take hence,” the Lord says, “*your pride and self-sufficiency.*”

A Mission in one sense may be called destructive ; in coming to close quarters with souls we too often find that the so-called religious life is nothing but a delusion and a sham, built upon the wrong lines altogether.

Sometimes one comes across a building that is so faulty in its construction, so utterly useless for any reasonable purpose whatever, that it is hopeless to think of remedying its defects by adding thereto, or taking therefrom, down it must come altogether, it only cumpers the ground, the rubbish must be cleared away, and the work recommenced from a fresh foundation, after another design.

So is it too often with souls : their life-work has

been in the wrong direction, they must make an entirely fresh start.

This is the case with the fabric of pride and self-sufficiency which too many people raise : down it must come, it is of no use our trusting to our own works, relying upon our own efforts, thinking that we are better than our fellows, and hoping by various good thoughts or actions to merit the favour of Almighty God. We must be emptied of self, we must have a deep sense of our own unworthiness, we must accept God's mercy and forgiveness upon His own terms, as of free grace, given of His bounty, not purchased or extorted from Him as a right, ere we can possibly be saved.

There are those who say, "What need have we of a Mission? We can very well understand the drunkards and profligates that abound in this place, needing a stern awakening, and we should be glad to hear that some special effort was being made to reach them, *poor things, they need it* ; but we, steady, consistent, quiet church-people, is it not almost an insult to our common-sense to bring the Mission-Preacher down upon us ?"

Ah ! dear friends, down it must all come, that

spiritual pride of yours ; it is only because your eyes are blinded that you think you are better than others.

You who might have stood up in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, are still crouching in the dark dismal prison-house of legal bondage, you whose religion ought to be one of peace and joy, are living lives of slavish fear.

We come, by God's help, to save you from this, to deliver you from thralldom, to make your future life one not of servitude, but of filial love.

But first of all, the rubbish must come down. You must feel the burden of your sins, your hard hearts must be broken, you must be contrite and penitent in spirit for the past, you must cast aside without a single reservation everything in which you have made your boast, and as humble suppliants come to the throne of grace, pleading :

“Just as I am, without one plea

But that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,

O Lamb of God, I come.

“Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind ;

Sight, riches, healing of the mind,

Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,

O Lamb of God, I come.”

"Take hence," the Saviour says, "*your love of the world.*"

Oh! how I abominate from the bottom of my heart that miserable expediency, that wretched spirit of subservient compromise that we see at work in the church in these days.

What! Let the world, that world that hates and detests everything that is good, take our religion under its cold, contemptuous patronage. What! let the world, that has crucified the Lord, nay, that day by day crucifies Him afresh, and puts Him to an open shame, regulate our worship, take the heart out of our preaching, instruct us in the duties of our daily life.

Shame upon you so-called Christians, that submit to these things. Shame upon you, that like Judas betray the Son of Man with a kiss. Full of protestations of love and affection for your Master, outward professors of His religion of sacrifice and self-denial, by your real conformity to the spirit of the world, giving the lie direct to your hypocritical pretensions, disciples of the lip and not of the heart.

This world must be cast out of the Temple.

I come to set up as the sole Sovereign and *Ruler of your affections*, as the One to whom alone

you owe allegiance, the Lord Jesus. I come jealous for the honour of my Master, to proclaim that He and He alone, "Who hath loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, is the One to whom glory and everlasting dominion appertain.

"Take hence," once more the Lord says, "*your sins.*"

In my garden I had a fine rhododendron, which without any apparent cause was withering away. All the other shrubs around it were full of vigorous life, it alone showed symptoms of premature decay. We lifted it up from the ground, and found that there was a cluster of worms at its roots, which were sapping its strength, and depriving it of nourishment.

So, many a soul instead of bursting forth into the glorious bloom and fruits of righteousness is stricken with a sickly disease, which portends a premature death.

The evil lies at the roots, there is some miserable bosom-sin, there is some wretched habit of sinful self-indulgence, hidden perhaps from almost every human eye, which is slowly but surely sealing its doom.

Oh, dear brother or sister, to whom these words come home, "Take it hence."

By God's grace during this holy season, while this call to repentance is sounding in your ears, make up your mind that you will break once for all the iron chain that binds you.

God the Holy Spirit will be in our midst, in answer to our prayers ; the blessed Jesus will be here ready to lead the erring sinner back to the path of right. The door of mercy is still ajar, the fountain for sin is yet flowing, the clefted rock is still open for refuge. Immediate pardon, forgiveness, and peace, I am come to promise in the name of Him Who is faithful to His word.

O spurn not the offer of grace now so lovingly tendered, it may be for the last time.

You complain of not having joy, you feel unhappy and wretched : at times you may laugh it off, and carry a bold front to the world, you know that in your inmost heart you are most miserable.

The fault does not lie with God, His arm is not shortened that it cannot save; the fault does not lie with Jesus, He longs for you with an intense longing such as you will not credit, He is even now while I speak knocking at the door

of your evil heart. The fault, dear friend, lies with yourself: it is sin, that black sin which has been the curse of your life, which keeps you in a dark dungeon of despair, which is dragging you down to hell, that now shuts you out from hope of salvation.

In God's Name, I bid you, "Take it hence."

"Take hence," the Master says, "*your unbelief.*"

You remember how it was said of Jesus that He was in His own country, in the place where He had been brought up from early childhood, "And yet He did no mighty works there, because of their unbelief." He was ready to manifest Himself in His power: He was willing to make His friends and acquaintances sharers of His bounty, to give them deliverance from their ills, and assistance in their needs, but He was met by an insuperable obstacle, the unbelieving heart of man. And so is it now. Jesus comes into our midst at a Mission, ready to do mighty works, to break down the hardest heart, to give pardon to the vilest sinner, but too often His purpose of love is frustrated by the spirit of unbelief that is so prevalent.

Do not let this evil spirit rise up amongst you

at this time. Have great faith and you shall see great results.

The success of our work does not depend upon human eloquence, the skill, judgment, or tact, displayed by those who are the conductors of the Mission : one man sows, another reaps, God alone gives the increase.

We look to God for a blessing : we call upon Him to magnify His name amongst us, and if our prayers are full of faith, He will open the windows of heaven, and pour down upon us a rich and abundant shower of mercy and grace.

Have, as I said, great faith : believe that God will bless this church and parish, that the faithful prayers that have been going up for so long will not remain unanswered. Believe, likewise, that God will visit your friends and relations ; bring your children, the members of your households to hear the word of the Lord. Oh ! how many most interesting cases have I witnessed, of whole families being brought to the Lord during such a time as this.

I have gone to a man under a deep conviction of sin, and after he has found peace, he has pointed out his wife who was likewise seeking the Lord, and after she had felt the burden of

her sins removed, she has sent me on to her children in different parts of the church, stricken down by the selfsame mighty Sword of the Spirit. How sweet it was to see all these dear ones leave God's house softened and subdued by the wondrous work that had been done in their souls, and yet with their faces radiant with the joy and gladness that Jesus had given to them.

A godly captain of the coastguard, whose wife and only son were converted during a mission I was holding at a seaport, came to me to bid me farewell.

"Ah, sir!" said he, "now that the house is resting upon the Rock it cannot fall, I shall never cease to thank God for His blessed work."

So may it be with you, dear mother, you have a son, a daughter whom you love better than life itself, would it not make you happy to feel that your beloved one was safe in the arms of Jesus for all eternity?

You husbands and wives, seek a stronger bond of union and affection even than that which now links you together, the union that springs out of devotion to the same Saviour, to the same blessed One, Who is leading you onwards to your everlasting joy.

To each individual soul, I say, believe that this Mission is especially sent to meet your own particular case. Believe that God is ready to bless, ready to forgive, ready to make you a partaker of His loving-kindness and tender mercy.

Go down upon your knees, and plead with the whole fervour of your being :

“ Pass me not, O gracious Father !
 Sinful though my heart may be ;
 Thou might'st punish, but the rather,
 Let Thy mercy light on me.
 Even me !

Have I long in sin been sleeping—
 Long been slighting, grieving Thee ?
 Has the world my heart been keeping ?
 O, forgive and rescue me.
 Even me !

Pass me not ! this lost one bringing,
 'Tis but one more, Lord, for Thee !
 All my heart to Thee is springing,
 Blessing others, oh, bless me—
 Even me !

“ Take hence,” lastly, says the Lord, “*your spirit of procrastination.*”

Now is the accepted time ; now is the season to make your calling and election sure.

Oh ! dear brethren ! let me entreat you, deal not with God as you have dealt with Him in times past. Once more the offer of salvation is made unto you, once more Jesus comes knocking at the door of your hearts, once more the Holy Spirit strives with you, once more in the name of the Crucified Redeemer we bid you come unto Him, and find rest for your souls.

Despise this opportunity, neglect this season of grace, harden your hearts once more against this offer of a full and free salvation, and your doom may be sealed for evermore.

Oh ! that I could prevail with you. Were it possible I would leave this spot, and go down upon my knees before each one present, and beseech you with tears to give heed to the words that I speak. You shall not reproach me at the last day, as we stand before the great white Throne. You shall not lay this to my charge, that you were allowed to drift into utter destruction without a voice being raised to warn you of the wrath to come.

Purify, then, the temple of your hearts, take hence those things that defile the sanctuary of the Lord. Take hence your indifference, your

slavish fear of man, your spiritual pride, your love of the world, your delight in sin, your unbelief, your spirit of procrastination.

In God's name once more, I bid you take them thence, and then Jesus, precious Jesus, will enter in.

THE END.



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PSALM LXXI. 15.

“ My mouth shall show forth Thy righteousness and Thy salvation all the day ; for I know not the numbers thereof.”

WHO ever forgets his first glimpse of the sea? You come down, it may be from an inland county, from the dust and smoke of the manufacturing town, or the green fields and shady lanes of the pleasant country, where the only water of any consequence is the little brook that runs past your village home. After a long and weary journey you arrive suddenly within sight of the sea. Yes, there it is, stretching out before you into the far distance,—here as blue as the glorious heaven above, there of a delicate emerald green, as it ripples peacefully in the bright sunlight. As you ramble along the shore to pick up the dainty sea-shells, and inhale the invigorating air, and glancing towards the

furthest horizon, mark the white sails of the vessels flitting to and fro, you feel that a new pleasure has been added on to life, that a fresh joy has been opened out to you, and your heart is overflowing with delight.

So is it when we come to look at that which is the subject of this little book,—the Full, Free, and Present Salvation which is the portion of all believing souls. As we gaze upon this wondrous love of God in Christ Jesus, which, full of a sweet and tender beauty, stretches like a mighty ocean far out from the shores of time to the utmost limits of eternity, our eyes overflow with tears of joy, while we bless our heavenly Father for all His goodness to us, His unworthy children.

Dear reader, may the Holy Spirit of God guide me to say the things that are right, and also dispose your heart to accept what is here put forward. I mean to put the matter so plainly before you that you cannot fail to understand what I say. And if it make you wise unto salvation, or strengthen the faith and deepen the love which you already have for your Saviour, to His precious Name be all the honour and glory. Amen.

In the history of the children of Israel we

have a wonderful representation of the future deliverance of the Church of Christ by the mercy and love of God. We see moreover that the salvation which was wrought out for them was twofold in its character. First of all, deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt, and then the possession of a land flowing with milk and honey : freedom from the thralldom of the oppressor, and then an abundant entrance into the privileges which God had in store for them. It is thus I propose to treat of *the fulness of our salvation* ; showing you first of all from what we are delivered, and then, after we are set free from the power of our enemies, what blessings are conferred upon us.

We are delivered from the curse of the law.

A Hindu, who was very unhappy and miserable in his mind, determined that he would endeavour to find relief by making a pilgrimage to a celebrated shrine at Benares, which was several hundred miles distant from his home. The more to propitiate his god he resolved to walk the whole distance on sandals thickly set with sharp spikes, which ran into his feet at every step, causing unutterable pain and distress. After he had been toiling for several months on his weary road, he fell in with another pilgrim

bent upon the same errand as himself, in the like hope of obtaining peace. His newly-found friend told him that a few days before he had heard a missionary preaching in the streets about a certain man who had lived and died a great many years ago, who was so good and so kind that he was enabled to relieve people of their troubles and sorrows. Talking about this strange doctrine, and wondering whether such a being ever existed, who had the power as well as the will to remove the sorrows of troubled hearts, they journeyed on. The evening was drawing near as they came to the village where they would sleep. Under a spreading palm tree they saw a crowd gathered together, and on their approach they saw that the centre of attraction was a missionary, who was very earnestly entreating the people to accept what he was addressing to them. As the two pilgrims listened they heard him describe the sympathy of Jesus for all those in need, and His power to deliver them from all their sins by virtue of His atoning Sacrifice. "Why that is the very man I heard of before!" said the second pilgrim to his friend. They stood on entranced, until the darkness began to close around them, and then going up to the missionary besought

him for more instruction. That very night their sandals were taken off, and they were on their way homewards, rejoicing in having found the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Thus it is that men are delivered from the burden and curse of the law. Limping sadly and wearily along, on the iron-spiked sandals of attempted obedience to a law which could not give righteousness, which set forth a standard of perfection far above their reach, they come at last within hearing of the Gospel of Christ. As the Scripture says, "Before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. iii. 23-25.) Having learnt the fulness of our salvation, away go the blood-stained sandals : no longer for us the weary and unsatisfactory straining after an impossible perfection ; we stand up in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. We find that salvation is of faith, not of works ; a free gift of God, not a reward of well-doing ; that those who close

with the gracious offer of pardon and peace through the merits and blood-shedding of the Saviour, have passed clear out of the condemnation and curse which rested upon those who were under the law, and are now living under the dispensation of grace.

We are delivered likewise from the condemnation of sin.

In the Reign of Terror, during the French Revolution, a father and his son, of the name of Loizerelles, were shut up in the prison of Saint Lazare, from whence every day from twenty to thirty unhappy beings were taken in tumbrils to the place of execution. The name of the son, a young man of twenty-two, was written down on the list of the condemned, and the gaoler on going his morning rounds summoned him to join the victims who were destined that day to fall under the knife of the guillotine. Without hesitation the father stepped out of his cell, and took his son's place : in the hurry of the moment the substitution was not noticed, and the old man was soon on his way to the spot where he laid down his life for his son.

It is thus that we poor sinners have been saved by Jesus from a worse fate than death. We

were lying under condemnation, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.) As the Apostle says in another place, "the scripture hath concluded all under sin." (Gal. iii. 22.) Resting then under the condemnation of sin, and perfectly helpless of ourselves, utterly unable to procure our own deliverance, it was necessary to have One "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. i. 4.) Jesus has put Himself in our place, and, taking upon Himself our guilt, has endured upon the cross all that was our due ; and therefore by His death, we who believe are freed from the condemnation and punishment of sin.

I am writing now in the pleasant spring-time. For weeks past we have been having cold winds, and dark gloomy days, with an almost continuous succession of showers ; but now the winds have been lulled to sleep, the rain-clouds have drifted away to the south, and the sun is shining gloriously upon a rejoicing earth. The nightingale is singing sweetly in a neighbouring grove, and I can hear the carol of the lark as he rises swiftly from the midst of the long grass on his

upward flight to the skies. The flowers are drinking in the light and the warmth of the kindly sun,—the bees and insects on the wing are full of animation and life,—and shall not I rejoice upon whose soul the Sun of Righteousness is shining? Shall not I be a partaker of the joy of the works of God around me? Surely I can sing with the happy birds, I can emit my incense of praise and thanksgiving with the blossoming flowers, I can mirror in the inmost depths of my being the tranquil peace that pervades the dark blue vault of heaven, as I fully enter into the meaning of those blessed words, “There is therefore now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. viii. 1, 2.)

Having written these few words about the deliverance that we have from the law and sin, I will now call your attention to the privileges which are ours by virtue of our deliverance.

The prodigal son is freely forgiven all his past offences by his loving Father, but even after his *Father* has fallen upon his neck and has kissed

him, there is need for an alteration in his condition ; his clothes are in rags and tatters,—those of a poor beggar ; his wayworn feet are bare ; he is reduced to the utmost extremity for want of food ; and so directly he passes the threshold of his home his father causes him to be clothed with the best robe, places the ring of honour and acceptance upon his hand, and shoes on his feet, while the fatted calf is killed and served up with music and dancing, to provide for the wants, and testify to the full pardon extended to the long-lost son. What a picture we have here of the way in which the heavenly Father deals with pardoned sinners ! Not satisfied with giving to us deliverance, He likewise heaps upon us many rich and glorious blessings, re-instating us completely in our former position, and fitting us for the inheritance to which He hath called us.

The first blessing conferred upon us is forgiveness.

This is the first thing that is necessary to a believer's happiness. If we have a little child with that sensitive conscience which is so beautiful a characteristic of childhood, and the little one has done something wrong for which it has

been rebuked, as the night comes on and it has to retire to its bed, it cannot say "Good-night" to father and mother, without in faltering accents saying, "Forgive me : I will not do so again." It could not lay its little head upon the pillow feeling that there was even a slight cloud between itself and those it so dearly loved. So is it with the believer's soul! We must start from a sense of God's forgiveness. Our conscience has been awakened : we have seen, under the influence perchance of God's Word, our fallen state ; we have at least been brought to realize the peril we were running of losing our own souls ; we have felt the weight of the heavy burden which was pressing us down, and the great desire of our hearts has been for freedom, for pardon and forgiveness : we could not bear to think that there was even the smallest shadow of an offence between us and our God, and so we yearned for a sense of pardon. Our heavenly Father does not long withhold this blessing. He speaks comfortably to our souls, and says to us, as the dear Lord did to the poor sinners of old times, "Be of good cheer : thy sins are forgiven thee. Depart in peace."

During that same Reign of Terror of which

I have already related one incident, in one of the prisons it was the custom of the warder to mark with a piece of chalk the doors of those who would on the morrow furnish the guillotine with its usual human sacrifice. Some of the cells had two doors, and the outer door of one of these being open, he marked the fatal sign upon its inside panelling. A short time after, another warder passing by noticed the door open, and shut it, thereby putting the chalk-mark completely out of sight. When the time came for the condemned to be summoned for the fatal toilette at the hands of the executioner, which was the prelude to their execution, the warders went down the passages, and wheresoever the chalk-mark appeared bade the inmate of the cell to come forth. All were led forth to their miserable end, but the prisoner whose death-token had been thus put out of sight. And so Jesus has procured for us freedom from the just penalty of our guilt, "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Our accuser comes down to look for the death-mark. He leads other sinners, it may be, away to their just

doom ; but when he comes to us, who are every whit as bad, he can find no sign of our condemnation. Jesus has passed by, and has put it out of sight ; we are thus freed from the fate which would otherwise be ours. What a different world, and what a changed life ours is, when we can fully believe in our perfect and complete forgiveness !

Look inside this train that is speeding through the fertile plains of France ; here, in this foremost carriage, is an English family full of high spirits and happiness, on its way to spend a few pleasant weeks in a beautiful villa by the side of the charming Mediterranean sea. What a scene of animated happiness the parents and children present, as they note with eagerness the various features of the country through which they are passing. Let your eye travel a little further down the train : in that gloomy looking carriage, which is lighted only from the top, we see a gang of unhappy convicts, linked together by a heavy chain, on their way from Paris to the Bagnes of Toulon, there to labour in a hard and hopeless servitude for the whole term of their lives. They are not allowed, even for the few *hours* which intervene between their transfer

from one prison to another, to look out upon the beautiful world to which they have bidden farewell. Misery, and sullen desperation you see imprinted upon their faces, as the train speeds on its way to their living grave. As great as this is the contrast between the forgiven and the unforgiven soul. There are those, alas, who, because of their unbelief, are shut out from the sight of the glory, majesty, and beauty of God,—who are hastening on to their eternal abode of misery and wretchedness ; there are those, again, whose hearts are full of a deep sense of the goodness and love of their Father, and rejoice, as life passes away, in the hope set before them, as forgiven and pardoned sinners, of a glorious welcome in the happy home that is prepared for them at their journey's end.

Another gift that is bestowed upon us is that of justification.

Having been forgiven, we are apt, until better instructed, to distress ourselves about our weakness and feebleness. We have set our faces heavenwards, but we find it so hard to persevere ; although delivered out of the land of bondage, we have still to fight our way onwards through the temptations, trials, and difficulties which

beset us on every side. And here this doctrine of justification comes in to our aid. As far as my acceptance with God is concerned, I have all that I need in Christ. From the moment that I believe in Him I am justified, and my faith, like that of Abraham's, is imputed to me for righteousness. In myself I am nothing, but I am accepted in the Beloved, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I can say with Luther, "Lord Jesus, Thou art my righteousness and I am Thy sin : Thou hast taken away what was mine, and hast given me what was Thine."

" Now I have found the ground wherein
 Sure my soul's anchor may remain,—
 The wounds of Jesus, for my sin
 Before the world's foundation slain ;
 Whose mercy shall unshaken stay
 When heaven and earth are fled away.

" O love, thou bottomless abyss !
 My sins are swallowed up in thee :
 Covered is my unrighteousness
 Nor spot of guilt remains on me ;
 While Jesu's blood, thro' earth and skies,
 Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries !

" With faith I plunge me in this sea :
 Here is my hope, my joy, my rest ;
 Hither, when hell assails, I flee.
 I look into my Saviour's breast :
 Away, sad doubt and anxious fear !
 Mercy is all that's written there."

A further blessing that is bestowed upon us is that of sanctification.

It has been well said, " Justification regards something done for us, sanctification something done in us ; the one is a change in our state, the other in our nature. The one is perfect, the other gradual. The one is derived from the obedience of the Saviour, the other from His spirit. The one gives us a title to heaven, the other a meetness for it." Our faith must be a living faith that worketh by love, that carries on to its completion the gracious work that has already been begun in our souls. But here again, that God alone may be glorified, I find that our sufficiency is of Him : in everything we are enriched by Him. It is " the Father Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) It is the Son Who " also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it ; that He might sanctify and

cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." (Eph. v. 25, 26.) It is the Holy Ghost of Whom it is affirmed, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." (Eph. i. 13, 14.) Oh, how happy is the life of simple, trustful obedience, when we learn to put ourselves entirely into God's hands, and allow Him to carry on His own good will and pleasure. This, dear reader, is the true secret of peace. I, and my self-will, and my self-reliance, must decrease, and my God must increase. It must no longer be I that live, but Christ that liveth in me. If there is a pleasure in making a real advance in the knowledge of earthly arts and accomplishments, how much happier does it make the believer to go on from strength to strength, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !

Once more: we have the promise of this life and of the life to come. We are now in a strange land, bearing the reproach of Christ, and enduring the shame, exposed to trouble, sorrow, anxiety and care. But yet, in spite of all, we

are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. You will see sometimes, on looking up into the sky, the storm-clouds that are near the earth careering swiftly before the furious gale, while in the higher regions of the air the clouds are resting unmoved, in peace and tranquillity. So is it with the believer's soul: he has been lifted into a higher region of assured calm and quiet hope, from whence he looks down upon the turbulence and agitation of the feverish worldly life.

God of His mercy gives to us a foretaste of the peace and joy of heaven. As the driftwood assured Columbus that in those unknown seas he was nearing the new world, we have also the promise of the life to come.

It was the evening of the death of a little child, and the other children were sitting sad and silent around their mother, subdued by the thought of that strange and mysterious power that had withdrawn the life of their little brother from their midst. Presently the eldest girl, named Alice, said, "Mother, you took all the care of baby while he was here, and held him in your arms all the time he was ill: now, mother, who took him on the other side?"

"On the other side of what, Alice?" asked the mother.

"On the other side of death, mother. Who took baby on the other side? He was so little he could not go alone."

"Jesus met him there," answered the mother. "It is He who took the little ones in His arms to bless them, and said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' He took our darling baby on the other side."

Yes, beyond this anxious struggling life we have the promise and assurance of a happy home. We know not what things are in store for us. Human imagination could not conceive,—human tongue could not describe what God has prepared for them that love Him. But soon, dear reader, we shall see these glories face to face; soon Jesus will come and meet us on the other side, and lead us by the hand through the pearly gates, and along the golden streets, into that blessed Presence where there shall be joy for evermore.

Although we have by no means exhausted the first part of our subject, we must now briefly consider a fresh aspect of this wonderful theme.

Our salvation is a free salvation.

As I look out of my study window upon an earth awakening from her trance of wintry sleep, my mind is overwhelmed by the thought of the generosity and prodigality of God. With David I say, "Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." I see a stately procession of massive clouds slowly passing on its way to the East on a mission of joy and gladness,—to refresh, at the appointed time, a weary earth. Over hill and dale, where-soever my eye wanders, I discern signs of God's providential care. All things are contributing their share to the universal happiness. The orchard trees laden with plenteous blossoms, the long grass just ready for the scythe, the lowing herds on the forest side, the sheep in the green pastures, the birds busy with their nests, and the bees gathering honey from the fragrant flowers,—all point the moral of my Father's generous forethought for His creatures' welfare. And then, as thought wings its flight to other lands, I learn that this little world of mine is but a faint reflection of that mighty universe in which God works, with such abandonment of self, such rich exuberance and prodigality of

love. Of all His choicest gifts, however, there is none so great as that of our salvation. He supplies all our wants and needs out of His fulness. He has endowed us with life, health, vigour, powers of body and of mind. He has furnished us with a sphere of work, and happy homes, and loving friends; and to fill our cup of happiness to the brim, He has added thereto this last best gift of all,—eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ.

This salvation is free as regards the conditions upon which it is given.

God will be no man's debtor. He will not rest under an obligation to any of His creatures. And so He gives to us eternal life as a free gift, as an act of His spontaneous grace. It is true that a price had to be paid,—the price of the Saviour's blood. It is true, likewise, that the claims of offended justice had to be satisfied by the Son of God being made sin for us. It was the Father, however, Who gave up His Son for us all. It was the Son Who offered up Himself as a willing Sacrifice. And so the more we look into this matter, the more we see how free grace has abounded. The wealth of all the Indies, a life of the strictest obedience to the law, nay,

even the sacrifice of existence itself for the benefit of others, could not procure for us the salvation of our soul. We must take it on God's own terms, or not at all,—as a free gift, without money and without price; given unto us not because of our own worthiness, but because of the love of our Father. Away then with all self-righteousness; away then with all vain attempts to accomplish that which has already been attained. Weak, feeble, sinful as I am, I have but to extend my hand for the proffered gift. I have but to avail myself of the one Sacrifice offered once for all for my sins, and I am saved.

This salvation is free as regards those to whom it is offered.

I cannot describe the happiness that fills my heart when I can stand up in God's house and proclaim the glad tidings of a free salvation. How glorious it is to be able to set forth the all-embracing love of Jesus,—to point to the wide extended arms that will welcome whosoever cometh! The cry is spreading far and wide amongst all bodies of earnest Christians: "Yet there is room." Many have passed on into the bridegroom's feast; many have accepted the

gracious invitation ; but there is room for as many more. All who hear, whatsoever their rank and condition, may come. The vilest sinner who has lived without God and without hope in the world, will find a welcome from the Friend of Sinners. The young and old, the rich and poor, the weak and strong, may all look at the Crucified One, and live.

A free Salvation ! Let it echo the world around ; let the joyful news find its way into the dark alleys and lanes ; to the bed of sickness and into the chamber of death ; let it cheer the soldier on the battle-field ; let it nerve the sailor in the raging storm ; let it be emblazoned on the banner that we soldiers of the cross carry into heathen lands : a salvation for all, given freely by a loving God to whosoever will accept it.

This salvation is likewise a present salvation.

I like to think of heaven and its future joys. I do not know how I should go through life's duties unless I could look forward to the prize of my high calling ; but yet I also rejoice in the fact that I have now *a present salvation*. From the moment the sinner believes in the Sacrifice offered up for him on the cross, he passes from death *unto life* : his sins are forgiven and pardoned.

Alas, how full of doubt and distrust too many Christians are ! They measure God by themselves and doubt His power to bring them safely through. I like to see a man full of happiness and joy, with his feet firmly set upon the Rock of Ages, able to partake of the hearty faith of St Paul, and to say, " I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have entrusted unto Him against that day." Is it not indeed heaven on earth, even here in the wilderness, to enter into rest?

A soldier on his dying bed, was asked by one of his fellows how he was, and he answered by the sentry's challenge : " All's well : all's well !" It is indeed well with us when our sins are laid upon Jesus, and we have the Holy Spirit bearing witness within us that we are the children of God. What power it gives to my work, what brightness it infuses into my life, what consolation in my sorrow, what sweetness to my bitterest cup, when I know that nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord, —when I walk as one whose name is already written in the Book of Life !

Dear reader, is this glorious salvation yours ? Do you know by blessed experience its fulness

and freeness, and can you claim it as a present possession? Can you not bear me out in all that I have said? Are you not the possessor of a joy that nothing can take away? Your onward path, is it not a progress from glory to glory, from one scene of happiness to another? May the Lord bless you, and bring you on your way rejoicing, until we meet together before the great white Throne to sing the praises of Him Who hath loved us. Are you, on the other hand, without this gift? Oh, reject it no longer! happiness is within your reach, heaven is in your grasp, if you will only come as we others have come,—as a poor sinner to your Saviour, there to find forgiveness, pardon, and peace. Only look upon Him with the eye of faith, only believe that He has put away your sins, only stretch forth your hand to receive the gift which he now through me offers to you, and at *that very instant* you shall pass from death unto life, and as a saved sinner shall sing,

“Here for a season—then above,”

the praises of that precious Blood that has washed you pure from all your sins. Amen.

THE END.

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